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The staff and editorial team at The Review of Religions wishes all its readers a very healthy, peaceful and blessed New Year

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Editorial

In the Holy Qur'an we are told by Allah

Verily, We Ourselves have sent this Exhortation, and most surely We will be its Guardian.

(Ch.15:V.10)

Muslims believe that the Holy Qur'an is a perfect book because it was Divinely revealed and because Allah has promised to be its Guardian. Whilst the Holy Qur'an has been translated into a variety of languages, there will always be only one Qur'an. So although translations may vary, there is always going to be one original text, which will never change. The significance of this cannot be underestimated. Whenever scholars disagree with one other about an interpretation of any part of the Holy Qur'an, there is always only one source to which they need to refer.

This is not the case with other scriptures. Although they may

have started out as revelations from God to His prophets, they have, with time, been altered by successive followers. So..... '...it is one thing for a book to be revealed and quite another for that book to retain intact its revealed text.' (*Introduction to the Study of the Holy Qur'an*, Mirza Bashir-ud Din Mahmud Ahmad).

In this month's edition, an article on 'The Divinely Revealed status of the New Testament', Mir Mahmood Nasir demonstrates that there are many contradictions in the Gospel accounts that prove that the Gospels do not constitute a revelation of God, or that because of human intervention, the original revelation has changed beyond recognition.

The lack of a preserved, unchanged source, can add to differences in interpretations of the Word of God. This is particularly acute when there is

pressure on religious establishments to ‘keep up’ with changes in social mores in order to appease followers. For instance, even something as simple as the Lord’s Prayers has not escaped the hands of innovators and interpolators with the passage of time. Are we to assume that those who uttered their prayers in the past were not heard or the manner in which the prayer is now couched is beyond the recognition of the Being to Whom it is addressed? With innovations can come changes, which may be in complete contradiction to God’s commandments. This issue is explored in our Notes and Comments with regard to the recent ordination of homosexual bishops in the Anglican Church.

The Promised Messiah^(as) reminds us that ‘God is the source of eternal happiness and pleasure for man’s life.’ It is Allah Who has also provided a guidance for mankind in the form of the Holy Qur’an about which we are told:

And We have sent down to thee the Book to explain everything, and a guidance and a mercy, and glad tidings to those who submit to God.
(Ch.16:V.90)

Sarah Waseem – UK

PLEASE NOTE:

In this journal, for the ease of non-Muslim readers, ‘(sa)’ or ‘sa’ after the words, ‘Holy Prophet’, or the name ‘Muhammad’, are used. They stand for ‘Salallahu alaihi wassalam’ meaning ‘Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him’. Likewise, the letters ‘(as)’ or ‘as’ after the name of all other prophets is an abbreviation meaning ‘Peace be upon him’ derived from ‘Alaih salato wassalam’ for the respect a Muslim reader utters.

Also ru or (ru) for *Rahemallahu Ta’ala* means the Mercy of Allah the Exalted be upon him.

Notes and Comment

Religious Tolerance

The Anglican Church is passing through testing times. The recent consecration of Gene Robinson as the Bishop of New Hampshire, USA has threatened to split the Church, as he is the first openly gay Anglican bishop.

There are 70 million Anglicans worldwide and many of their leaders have been outraged at this latest appointment. The strongest criticism has emerged from the African continent that is home to nearly 30 million Anglicans.

Bernard Malongo, the Archbishop for Central Africa said that the appointment brought darkness, disappointment, sadness and grief to his province. Archbishop Peter Akinola – leader of Nigeria’s 15 million strong Anglican community – has been the most vociferous in his opposition – he has rejected homosexuality as being contrary to the teachings of the Bible and in his statement on behalf of the Primates of the

Global South (representing some 50 million Anglicans) he added that the consecration ‘...clearly demonstrates that the authorities within Ecusa [Episcopal Church USA] consider that their cultural-based agenda is of far greater importance than obedience to the Word of God.’ (BBC News, 3 November, 2003)

The spiritual head of the Church, Dr Rowan Williams has been relatively quiet on the issue and noted that the emerging divisions were ‘a matter of deep regret’. He has set up a Commission that will report back in a year’s time, with the hope that it could preserve the unity of the Church. For some, however, it is already too late.

The current episode in the Church is a classic example of a religious teaching being pulled in different directions due to societal pressures. It is this constant trend towards greater moral freedom that generates such an extreme religious parallax – to the extent

that the debates over interpretation often overlook the simple and clear message of religious teachings themselves. By focussing on a single issue it is easy to lose sight of the bigger picture. In this case that bigger picture is the basic belief that religions do not originate from man but rather from God.

As God is perfect and the source of truth, then His underlying teaching should not only be flawless but also be consistent across the religious spectrum. If that is so then this could provide a useful source of guidance for mankind. For example on the paramount principle of the unity of God we find repeated reference to this key principle in all religions. If we look at the world's three main religions, for example, then we see that their scriptures are full of this message.

The Holy Qur'an states:

And your God is One God; there is no God but He, the Gracious, the Merciful.
(Ch.2: v.164)

and

Say, 'He is Allah, the One...And there is none like unto Him.'
(Ch.112: vs.2,5)

The Old Testament states:

'...The Lord our God is one Lord.'
(Deuteronomy 6.4)

and,

'...and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a saviour; there is none beside me.'
(Isaiah 45.21).

The New Testament is also clear and says:

'And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord.'
(Mark 12,29)

and,

'And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said

the truth: for there is one God and there is none other but he.’

(*Mark* 12,32).

The similarity of the emphasis and even the wording is striking.

Returning to the issue facing the Church today, can we find any similar parallels in the religious teachings? Interestingly enough a similar pattern does emerge.

The Holy Qur’an states:

And We sent Lot – when he said to his people, ‘Do you commit an abomination such as no one in the world ever did before you? You approach men with lust instead of women. Nay, you are a people who exceed all bounds.’

(Ch.27: Vs.55-56)

It also quotes Prophet Lot as saying:

Do you, of all peoples, approach males, and leave your wives whom your Lord has created for you? Nay, you are a people who transgress.

(Ch.26: vs.166-167)

The Old Testament makes clear:

‘Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is an abomination.’

(*Leviticus* 18,22)

In the New Testament, Jesus^(as) also reaffirms the rule of the Mosaic Law by declaring that:

‘Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the prophets.’

(*Mathew* 5:17)

Further guidance is found in the letters of St Paul:

‘And likewise also the men leaving the natural use of the woman, burned their lust toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly...’

(*Romans* 1,27)

This indicates that the issue is indeed serious and was considered important enough for God to address this through His prophets, not just once but several times. As is the case today, there must have been a need for this instruction in

the past also because society must have departed so widely from the original religious teachings. When any religion departs from its origin it runs into problems as the Divine consistency and purity of the message becomes polluted. This corrosive process stems from human egotism and the belief that 'man knows best'. This is why God sends prophets to either impart new, clearer guidance or to revive earlier guidance. In other words they are not sent to tell people that what they are doing is right but to tell people that in the sight of God what they are doing is wrong. Inevitably the initial reaction of the people is negative; they find the words and deeds of prophets unacceptable, unpopular and unnecessary. To them prophets seemed to preach practices that are intolerant, intolerant that is of the vices of society that have become the norm. This is something that we can relate to in our world today.

The church and perhaps all religions face this constant call to adapt religion to allow it to be more tolerant and embrace the modern world. The definition of

tolerance in this context is always towards a relaxation of religious laws and never the opposite. If that is what God had wanted for man then He would never have sent any prophets because man always gravitates towards the easier option. The fact is that prophets have been sent making clear that God has deemed such 'freedoms' to be harmful for man. Thus the case is clear – we can move away from religion and create a society that God has considered harmful for us or adhere to what He has deemed beneficial and uphold the teachings of prophets.

Why must man insist on changing the teachings of God to match modern trends? Such an act would indeed be intolerant towards the teaching of God. Real tolerance in religion is not achieved by changing the principles. The issue facing the Anglican Church is inconceivable in the Muslim world. What is forbidden in the Qur'an can never be changed to a permission with the passage of time.

Fareed Ahmad – UK

Sin Defined

Presented below is a compilation in translation, of excerpts taken from *Malfoozat*. This is the title of ten volumes containing the collection of discourses, speeches and addresses of Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as) of Qadian, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

Translated by Amatul Hadi Ahmad



The founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as).

In 1891, he claimed, on the basis of Divine revelation, that he was the Promised Messiah and Mahdi whose advent had been foretold by Muhammad, the Holy Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him) and by the scriptures of other faiths.

His claim constitutes the basis of the beliefs of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community.

[Translator's Note: All references to the verses of the Holy Qur'an are given in Arabic as they occur in the text. The English translation, presented in Italics, is taken from the translation of the Holy Qur'an by Hadhrat Maulvi Sher Ali Sahib^(ra). Where the Promised Messiah^(as) has himself stated a certain interpretation of an Arabic verse, this is incorporated in the main body of the text].

God is the source of eternal happiness and pleasure for man's life. When a person separates from Him or leaves Him in one way or another, about such a state of a person it is said that he has sinned. Furthermore, keeping in view the nature of man, God has further defined as 'sin' those acts, which through their

finer implications, prove to be harmful for man himself, even though a person sometimes may not be able to appreciate such harmfulness. For example, theft and harming others by taking away their rights, harms the purity of one's own life. An adulterer's act of adultery and his taking what may belong to someone else destroys his own piety and engulfs him in various physical and spiritual problems. Similarly those acts which are against the nature of man's purity and piety are also referred to as 'sin', as are all the related acts, whether related closely or distantly – these are also considered as types of sin.

God Almighty is greater than all else. He has the most knowledge. He is the true creator of man and of every particle that exists. It is He who is also the creator of man's nature and He is All Wise. If it is the case that with His complete wisdom and complete knowledge, He suggests that something is harmful for you and that indulging in it would not benefit you at all, then it is not

for a wise person to go against this.

We see that when a physician advises a patient to abstain from something, the patient acts on that advice without any argument. Why does he act in this way? He does so because he considers the physician to be in possession of much greater knowledge than he possesses himself. Similarly, there are things that are harmful for man's body or spirit whether man himself understands that or not. There are some things that would be harmful even if God had not given a ruling about them. In medicine also there are some things that are considered to be 'sins' [that is, they prove very harmful for a human being] and lack of medical knowledge is no excuse for the person who goes against the medical principles. [He would still suffer the harmful consequences were he to indulge in such things]. If someone chooses not to believe this, he can check this with doctors and physicians.

The point to remember is simply this that the root of sin is those actions that lead man away from purity and righteousness. The true love of God and union with God is the true pleasure and real comfort. Thus, moving away from God and being distant from Him is also sin and is the source of pain, sorrow and hardship. All that God dislikes because of His own sanctity is 'sin'. There are some matters on which people may not agree but the greater part of the world is jointly agreed that lying, stealing, adultery and cruelty are acts that all nations and religions jointly consider to be sins. Remember, however, that the root of sin is precisely those acts that distance man from God, that are against His sanctity, against His wishes and against man's nature. It is such acts that constitute 'sin'.

Every person can sense [the aspect of] sin [or goodness in their actions]. If someone slaps an innocent person and knows that he had no right to do so, he will at some later time, when he assesses his action with a cool

head, himself feel ashamed and will sense that it was a bad deed on his part. Conversely, should someone feed a hungry person, give a drink of water to one who is thirsty and clothe someone who is without clothes, such a person will have an inner sense of having been good and having performed a blessed deed. A person's heart and conscience and the light of belief remind him whether his various actions are a good deed or a sinful act.

With regard to Satan it should be remembered that in man's nature and composition there have been included two forces. These are both opposed to each other and it is so that a person be tried and tested and, with a successful outcome, become deserving of God's nearness. Of the two forces one pulls man towards goodness and the other invites man towards evil. The force that pulls towards goodness is called '*Malk*' or '*Angel*' and the force that invites towards evil is called '*Satan*'. In other words, you can understand it like this that there are two forces that work on a

person, one calls towards good, *Da'i khair* and the other calls towards bad, *Da'i sharr*. Someone may not like the use of the terms 'Angel' and 'Satan' but he would not be able to deny the existence of these two types of forces within man. God never intended any evil – God only does what is good.

If sin did not exist in the world there would be no goodness. Goodness develops from sin. The concept of goodness is formed by the concept of sin. If someone has the opportunity to commit adultery and he possesses the ability to do so but then he abstains from this sin, this action is called goodness. If someone has the opportunity to steal or to be cruel and he is capable of doing these acts but he does not do so and positively abstains from them then he is doing a good deed. To have the opportunity and capability of sinning and then not indulging in sin, that is a good and blessed deed.

[*Malfoozat, Vol. 10 pp.357-358*]

When a sick person goes to a physician, he cannot begin to cure him until he finds the true cause of his illness and when he finds the true cause he chooses a course of action to heal him. However, until the illness is fully diagnosed he cannot begin the best course of treatment. Exactly the same is true of sin. As sin is a spiritual ailment, a person cannot escape from sin until its true nature is diagnosed. A question can be raised here as to why man leans towards sin and why does the question of sin arise in the first place? The answer to this is that usually it can be seen that the human being sins as long he is unaware of God. Does the person who steals do so when the owner of the house is awake and there is light all around? It is obvious that he steals at a time when the owner is asleep and there is darkness so that nothing can be seen and when he is convinced that the owner is unaware and there is no light. Similarly, when a person sins, he does so when he is oblivious to the existence of God and does not have any belief in Him. He does not sin when he

is convinced that there is a God Who watches his deeds and Who can punish him. Nor does he sin when he has the knowledge that if he does anything against the wishes of God, he would be punished. When there is such knowledge and belief in God, there cannot be any inclination and attraction towards sin. When a person believes that he is always under the will of God Who can punish wrongdoing and Who watches over his actions, such a person cannot have the courage [to commit sinful acts]. If a sheep is tied before a wolf, its ability to graze in someone else's field is not an issue - it would not even glance at the grass that is put before it because it is mortified by fear for its life. Thus, when fear can take such a hold over an animal that it cannot eat, how can a person who similarly sees himself before God, believing with certainty that God does punish sins, how can such a person return to sin when he believes that God would strike like lightning and destroy him? It is this fear created through a belief in an Almighty

God Who is Holy and All Powerful that will save him from sin and create true belief.

It should be remembered that sins are of two types. One type is known as *Kabira*, that is greater sins that include acts such as theft, adultery, robbery, etc. and the other type is known as *Saghira*, that is lesser sins that occur as a result of human shortcomings. These occur despite the fact that a person may carefully safeguard himself against sins, yet his human failings lead him to commit some sins of the lesser kind. Likewise, there are two means of removing sins. Firstly, there is the force of fear. There are many sins that are removed by the overpowering fear of God, that is to say the overpowering fear of God is something that removes sins and safeguards against them. This is similar to that fear of the police which prevents a person from breaking the law. The other means of safeguarding against sin is the attainment of knowledge of God's mercy that leads to a greater love for God

and then with this love sins are removed. Sins are removed by both these means.

[*Malfoozat Vol.4*, pp.308-310]

As a result of human weakness, when a person errs and commits sin and then does not care a jot about it, his heart becomes stained with blackened rust and gradually the human heart that was clear and soft with the fear of God now becomes hard and blackened. However, as soon as a person finds out the nature of illness of his heart and strives to reform by being occupied day and night in *Salat* and supplicating to the utmost limit with pain and regret, seeking forgiveness, the manifestation of God [in response] would wash away his impurity with the 'water' of its blessing. Consequently, provided he remains steadfast, a human being with his purified heart takes on a new life – it is as if he has been reborn.

There are two powerful forces between which a human being walks. One is the force of

Rahman and the other is the force of Satan. Should a human being lean towards the force of *Rahman* and seek help from it, he is granted help by the command of God. On the contrary, if a human being leans towards Satan then he becomes engulfed in sins and tribulations. Hence a human being should come under the protection of *Rahman* in order to be safeguarded against the poisonous air of sin. It is sin alone that creates a distance and dissension between a human being and *Rahman*. He who escapes from sin finds refuge in the lap of God.

In reality there are only two means of safeguarding against sin. Firstly, a person should try himself and secondly he should seek steadfastness from God Almighty who is a very powerful and Omnipotent Master. He should seek help until he is granted a pure life and it is this that is called *Tazkia-e-Nafs*, that is, purification of the soul. [Malfoozat Vol.5, pp.446-447]

In an age when there a multitude

of sins committed and people of the world do not understand the true nature of faith - all that remains [of faith] is just the outer shell or bones without any inner kernel or true essence. The force of faith becomes very weak while the domination of satanic forces increases greatly. Moreover, there does not remain any interest or enjoyment in faith. At such times the perpetual rule of God manifests itself, namely, that God appoints a true and sincere servant of His, a servant who is completely immersed in the true obedience of God. Such a person is appointed and ennobled with the rare distinction of communication with God. In this age and at this time God has appointed me [as the Messenger of the time to rekindle in mankind the true love of God] because it is a time when the love of God had become totally cold.

Even though it may be generally observed that people believe in [the declaration] *La ilaha illallah*, i.e. there is no God but Allah, and they verbally attest to the truth of

the Holy Prophet Muhammad^(sa) – they perform *Salat* and keep fasts but spirituality is lacking. On the other hand, the prevalence of acts and practices that go against the principles of righteousness bear witness to the fact that performance of the stipulated worship is customary and there is not to be found even a hint of true spirituality. Otherwise, what is the reason that their acts of worship are not accompanied by the blessing [in the form] of righteous deeds and by the light [of faith].

Remember this well, unless deeds are done with a true and sincere intention and are accompanied by true spirituality, they can be of no benefit and will be of no avail. Deeds can only be referred to as righteous when there is no corruption in them of any kind. The opposite of rectitude is disorder. The pious person is he who is completely free from all forms of disorder and dissension. *Salat* that is in a state of disorder and is tainted with ulterior motives, is certainly not for God - it does not 'reach'

up above the ground by as much as even a hand because such people are devoid of sincerity and spirituality. [*Malfoozat Vol.6 pp.236-237*]

In truth there are only two principles for identifying sin: One is laxity in fulfilling one's obligations to God and the other is ignoring the rights of other men. These also form the basis of the true principles of worship. That is, the safeguarding of these two sets of rights forms the basis of true worship and sin is nothing but negligence regarding these rights.

You should fulfil the promise you have made today and should keep to the words [of *Bai 'at*] you have just pronounced at my hand, remaining steadfast upon them to the end. Man is sometimes deceived. He knows that he has sown for himself a 'tree' of repentance and he then expects some fruit from this, or he knows that he has faith so he awaits results. In reality, however, in the sight of God he is neither one who has repented nor

one who has true faith. This is because nothing can gain God's approval and acceptance unless it fulfils the conditions for this and until such conditions are fulfilled, a thing has no value before God. We see that when a person decides to purchase something, he considers things that he does not like to be of no value and buys only that which he likes. Hence, when human beings act in this way, how can God Who is Holy and Pure accept something inferior and of no value.

You should know that these are the days of much tribulation. There are epidemics and there is drought. In brief, God's wrath is descending upon the earth. At such a time do not deceive yourself and with a clear heart make for yourself a place of shelter. [*Malfoozat Vol.5, pp.242*]

Analysis of the Divinely Revealed Status of the New Testament

Historical Facts – The mutual discrepancies and contradictions in the Gospels – Acknowledgments of Biblical scholars.

(A substantial scholarly research article in response to the well-known orientalist Rev. Wherry's objections on the Holy Qur'an)

By: Syed Mir Mahmood Ahmad Nasir – Principal Jam'ia Ahmadiyya - Rabwah. (Translated from Urdu by Shermeen Butt)

Although it is commonly assumed that the New Testament was written in Greek, there is not a single version which is generally accepted by all Christians alike. The uninformed are mistaken in thinking that the New Testament is, like the Holy Qur'an, comprised of a specific preserved text. This could not be further from the truth and is most detrimental to the revealed status of the New Testament.

The fact of the matter is that the New Testament that is presented to us today is compiled from the hand written manuscripts of pre printing days. These manuscripts were written down in various regions and in various languages on different types of papers and in disparate writing styles. There are thousands upon thousands of discrepancies among these manuscripts that number in their hundreds. Keeping these manuscripts in view, attempts are made to find out as to what the original scribes wrote. This has been turned into and is known as 'Textual Criticism'.

Here a brief introduction to the manuscripts is presented along with a short overview of their mutual discrepancies.

The present day versions of the New Testament are compiled from various manuscripts

The manuscripts from which the present day versions of the New Testament are compiled have been divided into a few groups for expediency. The first group is comprised of those manuscripts that were written between the 4th century and the 10th century and are inscribed in Uncials. None of the manuscripts predating the 4th century, can be found in its complete form. These are called Scrolls because they are kept wrapped in the shape of a scroll. However, after the 4th century, manuscripts take the form of a book and are called Codex (plural codices). This group of manuscripts are considered most significant in the compilation of the New Testament these days. Some of the important Codices from among this group are as follows:

1. Codex Aleph or Codex Sinaiticus.

The German scholar Konstantin Tischendorf found this codex at St. Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai. He presented it to the Tsar as a gift. After the Russian Revolution it was bought and preserved by the British Museum.

2. Codex B or Codex Vaticanus:

This manuscript was preserved in the Pope's library in the Vatican. When Napoleon Bonaparte conquered Italy this manuscript was among the things he took with him as a mark of his triumph. The world of academia was thus able to benefit from this manuscript.

3. Codex A or Codex Alexandrinus:

The Patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church in Constantinople Cyril Lucar sent this manuscript to King James I of England and it is now maintained in the British Museum.

4. *Codex D or Codex Bezae:*

This belongs to circa 5th century and was presented to Cambridge University by a scholar named Theodore Beza. It is currently in the University library.

The second group of manuscripts that are used in compilation of the New Testament are those that were written up to the 9th century before the invention of the printing press. These were written in miniscule Greek letters by hand. Due to the fact that they are rather vast in number and closely match each other they were divided in text 'Families'. From among these, Family 1 and Family 13 are considered the most important in formulating the New Testament.

The third group of manuscripts does not comprise of complete manuscripts, rather these are fragments from manuscripts written prior to the 4th century. These are inscribed on papyrus, a brittle kind of paper made out of the papyrus plant, which grows on the shores of the River Nile in Egypt. This paper can be somewhat preserved in dry climates; however it dissipates in humid climates. In the past 150 years fragments of such manuscripts have been discovered in particular from the dry climate region of Egypt and these are kept in view when compiling the New Testament.

The fourth group of manuscripts kept in view when compiling the edition of the New Testament are the old translations of the New Testament, which were done in Latin, Aramaic and two ancient Egyptian languages, Saedi and Bokhair. There are also translations of secondary significance that are done in Armenian, Gothic, Ethiopic and Slavonic. There is disagreement among the Biblical scholars as to whether an Arabic translation of the New Testament existed in pre-Islamic days or not.

The fifth group of manuscripts employed in compiling the text of the New Testament are those extracts of the New Testament that ancient Christian writers wrote in their writings during the past centuries.

It is clear from the brief outline given above that a specific and complete text of the New Testament does not exist; rather the New Testament that is compiled and presented to the world by Christianity today is done so at the inclination of those who have inferred from numerous manuscripts. These manuscripts are mutually contradictory on up to 300,000 points.

A renowned Biblical scholar Ronald Murphy writes regarding this:

‘ It may be thought in the case of the Bible there is no need for textual investigation; that God would not allow textual errors to creep into it during the years it has been handed down. But that is simply not true. God did not choose to exercise such a miraculous providence over the books of the Bible.’

(The Dead Sea Scrolls and The Bible by Ronald E. Murphy, O. Cram. P37-38)

Papal decree regarding the sanction of the textual amendment of the New Testament.

There is a Papal decree regarding the amendments made to the text of the New Testament through the art of Textual Criticism in light of the contradictory nature of these manuscripts. In 1943 the Papal decree mentioned that:

‘In the present day indeed this art, which is called Textual Criticism and which is used with great and praiseworthy results in the editions of profane writings, is also quite rightly employed in the case of the Sacred Books because of that

very reverence which is due to the Divine Oracles. For its very purpose is to ensure that the sacred text be restored, as perfectly as possible, be purified from the corruption due to the carelessness of the copyists and be freed, as far as may be done, from glosses and omissions, for the interchange and repetitions of words and from all kinds of mistakes, which are wont to make their way gradually into writings handed down through many centuries.’

(Letter of Pope Pius XII entitled ‘Divino Afflante Spiritu’ 1943)

The condition of the manuscripts, mutual contradictions, flaws in writing, deliberate rearrangements and additions

It should be borne in mind that not only do these manuscripts contain mutual contradictions and flaws in writing, rather they also include deliberate rearrangements and additions. A well-known example of this is the last verse of Mark, that is 16:8-20. The foundation of the current day Christianity depended on Jesus (on whom be peace) ascending to heaven. However, as this is not mentioned in the ancient writings, in order to catalogue this unfounded creed, alteration and addition have been employed and the last verses of Mark that constitute Jesus’ (on whom be peace) ascending to heaven have been inserted. The traditional Christian beliefs have been defended most craftily in a renowned American Biblical commentary *Interpreters Bible*. It reads:

‘One of the oldest attempts to supplement and finish Mark is the so called ‘longer endings’ (Vss.9-20). This is not found in the best MSS (B SK sys, etc) and dates probably from the second century; it was compiled out of the data of other Gospels, and even of Acts, and may have been originally independent list of resurrection appearances. The author was probably, as Burkitt and Conybere held, the second century

presbyter Aristion or Ariston. It is attributed to him in an Armenian MS letter in 989.’

(*The Interpreters Bible*. New York, Abingdon. Cokesbury Press, Nashville. Parthenon Press, Nashville. USA)

In this reference, having admitted the fact that the last verses of Mark, 9-20, were not in the original book, a cover up is being attempted in that it is maintained that this subject was taken from another gospel or that the author was 2nd century Bishop Aristion. In any case, even if both these matters are acknowledged, the question remains, does the original Mark now contain an amendment and insertion or not? If so, then not much remains of the revealed status of this book and should not Rev. Wherry have raised protestation of slander on the New Testament rather than on the Holy Qur’an?

It is also worth noting here that the last verses of Mark do not prove to be insertion solely on the evidence of the manuscripts, rather the evidence within Mark is also the same. The eighth verse of the last chapter is translated in English as:

‘And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid’.

This translation is not entirely correct. In the original Greek the last words of verse 8 are: **ephobounto gar**. The translation of this is: ‘they were afraid because’, NOT ‘for they *were* afraid’. It is quite clear that the original Mark would have explained a reason for their fright and that it had not seemed favourable to those who came later, so they omitted it and made the rearrangement.

Another claim made in the above reference is that although the last eight verses are not part of the original Mark, they were compiled out of the data of other gospels. This claim tends to make the integrity of *Interpreters Bible* dubious because its authors know full well that

from among the gospels, the two that are associated with disciples have no mention of Jesus' (on whom be peace) ascension. Although Luke apparently contains this, yet the evidence from the certified manuscripts proves that the original Luke did not mention the ascension at all. Each page of *Interpreters Bible* presents two texts side by side, one from King James Version and the other from Revised Standard version before giving its own commentary.

The last words from the King James Version of Luke's Gospel are:

‘He was parted from them, and carried up in to heaven, and they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem.’
(*Luke 24: 51-52*)

However, Revised Standard Version translates this as:

‘He parted from them and they entered Jerusalem with great joy.’

This indicates that neither did the original Luke mention Jesus' ascending to heaven nor did it mention the disciples worshipping him. It is therefore evidently inaccurate of the authors of *Interpreters Bible* to maintain that the additional insertion of the last verses of Mark that mention Jesus (on whom be peace) ascending to heaven is adopted from other gospels.

The contradictions and inconsistencies of various current editions of the New Testament.

Leaving aside the above mentioned manuscripts, contradictions and inconsistencies are also to be found in the editions of the New Testament of the present day. In both the gospels of Luke and Matthew, the genealogy of Jesus (on whom be peace) is given through Joseph although Joseph had no direct connection with him. Quite apart from this, in both the genealogical records there is also

contradiction in the arrangement as well as the numbers of names. In Matthew there are 40 names from Abraham to Joseph and in Luke there are 54. Is it possible to envisage such a contradiction in two books of One God?

In their genealogical records, both Matthew and Luke declare Jesus (on whom be peace) to be the son of David (on whom be peace). It is also a commonly held belief among the Jews that the awaited Messiah will be from among the progeny of David. It is possible that in order to establish him to be from the progeny of David, the writers of the gospels have given him the genealogy of Joseph. However, it was a matter of debate among the Jews as to which son of David, (on whom be peace) the awaited Messiah belonged. Some said that he would be from David's son Solomon whereas others insisted that he would be from David's other son, Nathan's progeny. Observe how the gospel writers have resolved this matter within their own fraternities; Matthew declared Jesus to be from Solomon's lineage and Luke from Nathan's.

One wonders what Rev. Wherry, who makes (God forbid) slanderous remarks about the Holy Qur'an, opines about the books of the New Testament?

Another example of similar inconsistencies is that the gospels of Mark and Matthew clearly state that Jesus (on whom be peace) declared his divine commission after John was arrested. (Matthew 4:12-17 Mark 1:14) However the gospel of John clearly details that Jesus (on whom be peace) had announced his divine commission a while before John's arrest and that he had started taking pledges of allegiance.

Would Rev. Wherry, despite this evident inconsistency still, consider these three gospels to be the Word of God?

Although Rev. Wherry makes slanderous remarks about the Holy Qur'an he cannot present any Qur'anic prophecy that has been proven false. This is because the Holy Qur'an is the word of the Knower of the Unseen God.

However certain prophecies of the New Testament can be presented that have proved to be completely wrong. For example Paul says in 'Thessalonians':

'For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died. For this we declare to you by word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died. For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage one another with these words.'

(1 *Thessalonians* 4:14-18)

Even if Paul had made up this prophecy, its falsification would have been indictable for the New Testament because according to Christian belief, the four gospels and the letters of Paul and others are all word of God. However, here Paul, according to verse 15, lays the foundation of this prophecy on the word of Jesus (on whom be peace). The gospels also contain certain phrases of Jesus (on whom be peace) that are constituted of this prophecy. In chapter 24 of Matthew there is mention of the 'second coming' before the end of the current generation. Jesus (on whom be peace) says:

'Immediately after the distress of those days the sun will be

darkened and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken, at that time ‘the son of man’ will appear in the sky, and the tribes of the earth will mourn and they will see ‘the son of man’ coming on the cloud of heaven’ with power and great glory. And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly, I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.’

(Matthew 24: 29-35)

‘For the son of man is to come with his angels in the glory of his father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the son of man coming in his kingdom.’

(Matthew 16:27-28)

‘Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the son of man will also be ashamed when he comes in glory of his father with the holy angels.’

(Mark 8: 38)

‘And he said to them, ‘Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see that the

kingdom of God has come with power.’
(*Mark 9:1*)

It is evident from the above references that the authors of the New Testament considered the prophecy of Jesus (on whom be peace) about his second coming to manifest itself before the end of his first age to be a conclusive prophecy. However this did not happen and now even after two thousand years having elapsed, this prophecy has still not been fulfilled.

Would Rev. Wherry still insist on the Holy Qur’an, God forbid, being slanderous and the New Testament being a holy book and Word of God?

The fact that none of the writings of the New Testament are Jesus’ (on whom be peace) or indeed any of his disciple’s is most detrimental to its validation. Of the four gospels it is well known about two, Mark and Luke, that they are certainly not the writings of any disciple. However, the gospels of Matthew and John are at times attributed to be the writings of the two disciples: the Apostle Matthew and the Apostle John. However, this has now been proven to be incorrect by the research of Christian authors themselves. It is worth noting that both the books themselves do not even contain a hint of a claim of being writings of the disciples.

Encyclopaedia Britannica (edition 1975) writes:

Although there is a Matthew named among the various lists of Jesus disciples, more telling is the fact that the name of Levi, the tax collector who is Mark became a follower of Jesus, in Matthew it changes to Matthew. It would appear from this that Matthew was claiming apostolic authority for his gospel through this device but that the writer of Matthew is probably anonymous. (*Ref: Biblical Literature*)

It says about the gospel of John:

Irenaeus calls John the beloved disciple, who wrote the Gospel in Ephesus. Papias mentions John the son of Zebedee, the disciple, as well as another John, the presbyter, who might have been at Ephesus. From internal evidence the gospel was written by a beloved disciple whose name is unknown. Because both external and internal evidence are doubtful, a working hypothesis is that John and the Johannine letters were written and edited somewhere in the East (perhaps Ephesus) as the product of a “school,” or Johannine circle, at the end of the first century .

(Ref: Biblical Literature)

On the subject whether the writer of the gospel of Matthew was a disciple or not, *The Westminster Dictionary of the Bible* writes:

‘The Question of authorship is no easy problem. There is a strong and consistent tradition in the early Church that Matthew was the author. This tradition is confirmed: (1) by the conclusive evidence, furnished by the contents, that the writer of this gospel was a Jewish Christian emancipated from Judaism; (2) by the improbability that so important a book would have been attributed to so obscure an apostle without good reason; (3) by the likelihood that a publican would keep records; by the modest way in which the writer speaks of the feast given by Matthew to Jesus’.

(ch.9:10ofLuke5:29)

‘On the other hand, many scholars feel that internal evidence makes it difficult to accept this tradition of the early Church. Matthew reproduces about 90 percent of the subject matter of Mark in language very largely identical with that of Mark.

Now it is highly improbable that an apostle would have used as a major source the work of one who in all likelihood had not been an eyewitness of the ministry of Jesus. Papias, bishop of Hierapdis in Phrygia, writing C. A. D. 140, may provide a key to this problem. Eusebius (H. E. iii. 39, 16) quotes him as saying, “Matthew collected the logia (sayings, or oracles) in the Hebrew language, and each one interpreted them as he was able.” This brief sentence is probably to be interpreted as follows. The Apostle Matthew (C.A.D 50) wrote down Jesus’ sayings in Aramaic. These sayings, with a brief frame of historical narrative were translated into Greek and thus constituted the document that scholars designate by the symbol (for German Quelle, source). This document and material from Mark and other sources were woven into what is now our First Gospel. By this hypothesis, the name Matthew, originally attached is the Aramaic source of Q, was transferred to the whole work which had incorporated it.”

(The Westminster Dictionary of the Bible by John D. Davis, PhD., D, LL.D., late professor of Old Testament Literature, Princeton Theological Seminary Revised and Rewritten by Henry Snyder Gehman, PhD., S.T.D Professor of Old Testament Literature and chairman of the Department of Biblical Literature Princeton theological Seminary and Lecturer in Semitic languages, Princeton University London and New York. Collins Clear Type Press. Glasgow-Toronto-Sydney and Auckland.)

The same book writes about the gospel of John:

‘Like the other gospels the Fourth does not mention the writer’s name but both internal and external considerations lend some support to the traditional belief that the work was

written by the Apostle John. ...It must be stated, however, that many scholars today do not feel the cogency of the above reasoning. They believe that the author of the fourth gospel was distinct from John the apostle, who was the witness to whose testimony the author and his followers appeal (John 19:33:21:24) The Evangelist (the author proper) was, according to these Scholars a disciple and follower of John the son of Zebedee (the apostle) and wrote from the reminiscences and the teaching of his master, an eyewitness. His name is either unknown to us or, more likely, was John the presbyter or Elder (cf. 11 John I and III John I).

Thus though the Apostle John was responsible for the gospel, it was actually written by the pen of another; it is according to this view “the Gospel of John the Elder according to John the Apostle”.

(Ref: John The Gospel according to)

Although Peter most lucidly says in II Peter:

‘Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have received a faith as precious as ours through the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ.’

(II Peter 1:1)

Christian writers generally maintain that this is not a letter of the Apostle Peter. In the past certain eminent Christians rejected this to be a letter of Peter whereas now the majority refutes Peter being the author. *Interpreters Bible* which, in general adheres to the traditional Christian creed, writes on this subject:

‘When Irenaeus (Ca.AD.185) quoted words “said by Peter”, he invariably had in mind passages from I Peter. His introductory formula, “Peter says in his epistle,” implies that

he recognised only one epistle as by Peter. He may have known only one epistle under Peter's name. Conceivably, however, he knew II Peter but rejected its authenticity. Contemporary leaders in the West, such as the author of the Muratorian Canon, Tertullian, and Cyprian were similarly silent regarding II Peter.

Clement of Alexandria was an Eastern contemporary of these Western leaders. Eusebius says that in his outlines Clement gave "Concise explanations of all the canonical scriptures," including "disputed" writings such as 'Jude and the Apocalypse known as Peters.' His statement clearly implies an acquaintance with II Peter. Clement's extant writings, however, contain no quotations from II Peter and reflect no acquaintance with it.

The earliest explicit reference to II Peter is made by Origin (AD. 217-51). He says that Peter "left only one epistle of acknowledged genuineness". Without trying to account for or refute current scepticism about the authenticity of a second epistle under Peter's name, he says simply, 'This is doubtful'. Eusebius (ca AD.325) included II Peter in his New Testament with the other Catholic Epistles. He recognised, however that its canonisation, was the outcome of its being "read in public in most churches" rather than the result of any certainty of its authorship by Peter. Only I Peter he says, is recognised 'as genuine and acknowledged by the elders of olden times.'" II Peter is used 'along with the other scriptures' despite the tradition that "it was not canonical." The Judgement prevailing in the Church caused Eusebius to describe II.

Peter as disputed, nevertheless familiar to the major-

ity.” Athanasius and Augustine both recognized II Peter as canonical. Neither says anything about its authenticity. Essentially the same position is taken by the third council of Carthage (AD.397). Jerome at about this time expressed the judgement that Peter “wrote two epistles which are called Catholic.” ‘Because of differences in style, however, he says that II Peter is considered by many not to have been by him.’ The epistle names Peter as its author. Its message is said to be from “Simon Peter, a Servant and apostle of Jesus Christ.” (1:1)

This ascription is further emphasised by the authors allusion to Jesus prediction of Peter’s martyrdom (1:14: cf. John 21: 18-19), his claim to have been with Jesus ‘on the holy mountain’ on the occasion of the Transfigurations (1:17-18 cf. Matthew. 17:5, Mark. 9:7; Luke 9:35) and his implicit reference to I Peter as also written by him (3:1).

This zeal of the epistle for its own authenticity creates more doubt than confidence and other data fails to support its claim. Differences in style from I Peter create insuperable difficulties for the news that the two epistles have a common author. Although both are probably pseudonymous, a strongest case can be made for the authenticity of I Peter. The possibility of Petrine authorship is definitely eliminated by data which locate the second epistle in the second century:(a) the incorporation of Jude as its second chapter; (b) the authors implicit classification of himself with a generation to whom the fathers were known by tradition (3:2,4); (c) the recognition of Paul’s letters as scripture(3:16);(d) the allusion to heretical misuse of Paul’s letters (3:16).

Because he felt he wrote in Peter’s spirit, this unknown

Christian leader of the second century felt justified in attributing what he wrote to Peter that this was legitimate by current literary standards is shown by the titles of other second-century (writings) such as the Gospel of Peter, the Acts of Peter, the teaching of Peter and the Preaching of Peter. Peter symbolised original and authoritative Christianity. By his authority, therefore, our author condemned heresy.’

(The Interpreters Bible New York, Abingdon Press Nashville. Vol. XII)

In the above reference not only is the writer compelled to acknowledge that II Peter was not by the Apostle Peter but also that some anonymous person had written it in the second century and attributed it to Peter. In passing, he also acknowledges that I Peter was not Petrine either. Therefore, the four gospels as well as the other writings of the New Testament are not the writing of Jesus (on whom be peace) or of his disciples. Rather they are writings of a latter period, some of which have been attributed to the disciples.

In the books of the New Testament, in particular the four gospels, Jesus’ miracles have been mentioned with the idea to establish his divinity. As it has been previously said here, neither is the New Testament a divine revealed book nor does it claim to be one nor do its authors call themselves prophets or divinely inspired. They did not display any miracles to validate any claim to prophethood or to establish their writing as the word of God. Leaving aside prophethood, if the four gospels are closely scrutinised, its writers do not even come across as substantial, authoritative historians.

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) writes:

‘Another objection that I had made about the gospels was

that all the miracles written in them that are used to seemingly prove Jesus' (on whom be peace) divinity, are most certainly not verified. This is because prophethood of the gospel writers, which would have been pivotal to its verification, has not been authenticated; neither did they claim prophethood nor did they display any miracle. As far as their having chronicled the miracles as news-writers is concerned, the requisites of news-reporting are also not verified in them. This is because it is essential that a news-writer is not censorial. Secondly, that his memory is not impaired. Thirdly that he is a deep thinker and is not a person given to superficial ideas. Fourthly that his critique is judicious and that he does not suffice on what is outwardly apparent. Fifthly that whatever he writes, he has eye-witnessed and that he is not the one merely to present the good and the bad. However, the writers of the gospels do not possess any of these prerequisites. It is a proven fact that they have intentionally lied in the gospels. So, the connotation of Nazareth was inverted and Emmanuel's prophecy was pointlessly imprinted on Jesus and it was put down in the gospel that if all of Christ's works were written down, the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Whereas their power of recollection is such that certain references of earlier books were made erroneously and by writing down unreal accounts they have proven that they were not used to working with insight, reflection and research. In fact in certain parts the gospels contain utterly disgraceful untruth, like in chapter five of Matthew Christ says: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy'" (5:43) although the earlier books do not contain this phrase. Similarly their description that "all the dead came out of the tombs of the temple of Jerusalem and came into town" (reference to a narrative of

Matthew 27:52-53) is extremely preposterous and none of the gospel writers, who wrote down the miracles, claimed at the time that this was their eye-witnessed account. Therefore it proves that they did not possess the requisites of news-reporting and their account is not at all worthy of being relied. Notwithstanding this unreliability, what they summon to is a most abject idea and a disgraceful creed. Does wisdom merit acceptance that a humble mortal that has all the requisites of mankind in him should be called god? Can rationale accept that creation whip-lashes its Creator and God's people should spit on their 'god' who is the possessor of power and authority and that they should seize him and put him on the Cross and despite being 'god', he is helpless to contend with them? Can anyone comprehend that a person who is known as 'god' prays all night and even then his prayer is not accepted? Can any heart be at peace with the idea that 'god' could be in the womb like helpless babies for nine months feeding on the placenta and eventually is born screaming from the female private parts? Can any wise person accept the notion that God should embody after an innumerable era that was without a beginning and that part of him should take the form of man and part pigeon and that this body should harass him forever.'

(Kitaab al Bariya. Roohani Khaza'een, Vol. 13 Pages 85-87)

An overview of the ethical teachings of the Gospel

There is no sense of greatness regarding the revealed status of the New Testament even when viewed with reference to its subject matter. Western academics who have abandoned the traditional Christian beliefs of trinity, atonement and divinity of Jesus (on whom be peace) still seem to be influenced by Jesus' personality and the ethical teaching of the New Testament. We shall submit a few comments

regarding the personality of Jesus (on whom be peace) in response to the objections of Rev. Wherry. As far as the ethical teaching of the gospels is concerned, it has been called unequalled and matchless.

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) has made four objections in principle about this teaching:

- a.** This teaching is defective and incomplete because it irrigates only one branch of the human tree and renders the other branches useless.
- b.** This teaching is not unequalled and matchless, rather, it was commonly available before the New Testament and is found word for word in the books of the Old Testament, Talmud and other books of the Israelites.
- c.** This teaching is not in accordance with the attributes of God the Exalted that are reflected in the Book of Creation and the Laws of Nature.
- d.** As a teacher in ethics, Jesus (on whom be peace) did not himself act upon the teaching that is associated with him.

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) says:

‘From among all the branches of human powers the gospel only stresses on the branch of forbearance and forgiveness while completely eradicating the other branches. Each and every person can understand that nothing is useless in whatever Nature has granted and that each and every human power has been created with its specific expediency. Just as at certain point in time forbearance and forgiveness are high morals, similarly at other times sense of honour and

retaliation and reprisal and punishing the criminal are included in high morals. Neither forgiveness nor pardon is always expedient nor punishment and retaliation always advisable. This indeed is the Qur'anic teaching. Allah the Exalted says in the Holy Qur'an:

And the recompense of an injury is an injury the like thereof; but whoso forgives and [his] act brings about reformation, his reward is with Allah'.

(Ch.42:V.41)

That is to say that the recompense of evil is as much as the evil committed. However, whoso forgives and that forgiveness has an objective of reformation, then the reward for that is with Allah.

This is the Qur'anic teaching. However, the gospel instigates unconditional forgiveness and pardon thus crushing all the other human measures on which the succession of civilisation carries on. It has enthused about the growth of just one branch out of all the branches of the tree of human powers, completely abandoning any regard for the other branches. Also astonishing is that Jesus (on whom be peace) himself did not act upon the ethical teaching. Upon finding the fig tree fruitless he said a malediction while he taught others to pray and also commanded others not to call anyone foolish but according to the New Testaments, himself exceeded so much in abuse that he went as far as calling the Jewish elders 'bastards' and made harsh verbal abuses towards the Jewish clergy in each of his sermon calling them terrible names. It is the obligation of an ethical teacher to initially exhibit high morals. Could, therefore, a defective teaching, on which he himself did not act upon, be from God

Almighty? The pure and perfect teaching is that of the Holy Qur'an that nurtures each and every branch of the human tree. The Holy Qur'an does not just stress upon one factor, rather at times it teaches pardon and forgiveness on the condition that forgiveness is prudent; and at times in accordance with the time and place it pronounces to punish the wrongdoer. In fact it is an image of the laws of nature of God Almighty that are ever in front of us. It is a most rational matter that both God's Word and Act should be analogous in that it is imperative that God Almighty's true Book teaches in accordance with the colour and style in which God Almighty's Act is visible in the world, rather than the Word displaying something else and the Act something quite different. We notice that God Almighty's Act is not always gentle and forgiving, rather He punishes the wrongdoers with various torments. The earlier books also mention these torments. Our God is not just a Forbearing God, rather He is also Wise and indeed His chastisement is also great. The true Book is one that is in accordance with His laws of nature and the true Divine Word is that which is not contrary to His Act. We have never observed God always treating His creation with compassion and pardon while no torment comes to pass. In the current age too, Allah the Exalted has informed the wicked natured people through me of an extraordinary and dreadful earthquake that shall destroy them. Plague has also not been quite eradicated yet. Prior to this what became the state of the people of Noah and what happened to the people of Lot! Therefore understand with certainty that the sum and substance of *Shariah* is to imbue the attributes of God, to attain the attributes of the Glorious God in us. Therein indeed is the excellence of the "self" (*nafs*). If we wish to inculcate in us a righteous attribute even greater than God, then that would be faithlessness and defiled effrontery and an

objection on the attributes of God.’

(*Chashma Masihi. Roohani Khaza'een. Vol. 20. pp.37, 43, 45*)

As regards the ethical teaching of Jesus (on whom be peace) as found in the New Testament and its reference of being found in its older books and about its adaptation from them, he writes:

‘If the author of *Yana bi' al-Islam* has tried to [infer] that the Holy Qur'an is made up of such and such tales and books then this attempt of theirs is not even a thousandth of that effort which a learned Jew has made to discover the origin of gospel. This scholar has, to his mind, proven that the ethical teaching of the gospel has been taken from the Jewish book Talmud and a few other books of the Israelites. This copying has been done so overtly that complete phrases have been copied exactly. The scholar has shown that the gospel is a compilation of stolen property. In fact he went out of the way in particularly proving the Sermon on the Mount, of which the Christians are very proud to be word for word adopted from Talmud. He has demonstrated that these are the phrases of Talmud and has similarly astonished people about plagiarised phrases from other books. Thus even the European research scholars are attentively taking interest in this.’

(*Chashma Masihi. Roohani Khaza'een. Vol. 20. Page 339*)

This research, which was introduced in that age, has now become an undisputed fact. Renowned Biblical scholar Geddes Macgregor writes about the ethical teaching of Jesus (on whom be peace):

‘His ethical teaching was in no way radically different from the loftiest traditions of Judaism into which he was born. This is plain from a careful reading of the Old Testament

itself; the recently discovered Dead Sea Scrolls corroborate the already well established fact that as an ethical teacher Jesus gave his hearers a message, which, however powerfully presented and convincingly demonstrated was not so distinctive as to be accounted as novel. In his ethical teaching Jesus was in many ways conservative. True, he emphasised certain elements in the now rich Jewish tradition and disapproved of certain tendencies he noted in his development, but this would be true of any teacher worth listening to’.

(The Bible In Making, p.24, by Geddes Macgregor)

The renowned American religious personality, the late Rev. Charles Francis Potter writes:

‘Moreover, it is extremely embarrassing to read the best part of the Sermon on the Mount, for instance, in the Enochian and other similar Essene writings, such as Jubilees, the Psalms of Solomon and the Testament of the twelve Patriarchs, when we have found actual pre-Christian manuscripts of them in Cave 4.’

(The Lost Years of Jesus Revealed, p.75, by The Rev. Dr. Charles Francis Potter.)

The teaching of the Gospel was for a specific era and a specific people.

While maintaining that the Christian books are the Word of God and the Holy Qur’an, God forbid, defamatory, Rev. Wherry seems to forget that the sphere of those books, according to his own writings, is restricted to the Israelites rather than the entire world and for all time. Also their teaching is applicable to a specific period and within a limited sphere, and it is impossible for the entire world to act upon it for all time.

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) says:

‘Over and above this, another argument for the need for the existence of the Holy Qur’an is that all the older scriptures, from Moses’ Torah to the Gospel, maintain their addressees to be an exclusive people, that is the Israelites, and say in open and lucid words that the guidance therein is not for universal benefit, rather is limited to the Israelites. However, the Holy Qur’an has the reformation of the entire world in view’.

(Kitaab ul Bariyya)

He goes on to say:

‘The Christian research scholars are also insistent that according to his religion, a Christian can neither live in human society nor can he do trade because the Gospel has forbidden one to become rich and to be concerned about the future. Similarly a true Christian cannot join the armed forces because one is commanded to love the enemy, just as if one is a perfect Christian, one is also not allowed to get married. All this informs us that the Gospel was a law for a specific era and a specific people and by maintaining that it is universal the Christians have invited objections to it.’

(Kitaab ul Bariyya)

Indeed, the Christians themselves acknowledge that as far as the message and teaching of the Old Testament is concerned, these were limited to the Israelites. However, the New Testament also illustrates that contrary to the latter Christian thoughts, Jesus (on whom be peace) himself considered his mission to be for a limited period and also limited to just one nation. Therefore he says:

‘I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.’

(John 16:12-13)

‘Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfil. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven’.

(Matthew 5:17-20)

Jesus (on whom be peace) said to his twelve disciples:

‘...Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.’

(Matthew 10:5-6)

It says in Matthew:

‘Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, “Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David” my daughter is tormented by a demon.’ But he did

not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, "Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us." He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the Israelites". But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." He answered, "It is not fair to take children's food and throw it to the dogs." She said, "Yes Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." Then Jesus answered her, "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed instantly.'
(*Matthew 15:21-27*)

Would Rev Wherry, despite the existence of his books, still not feel the need for the Holy Qur'an, which carries the message:

'Say, O mankind! Truly I am a Messenger to you all from Allah...'
(The Holy Qur'an Ch.7:V.159)

In response to the question raised by Rev. Wherry regarding, God forbid, the Holy Qur'an's own testimony about its offensiveness, we conclude that the Holy Qur'an has, in itself, claimed to be a miracle and a perfect book. However, none of the four gospels makes a comparable claim about itself. While addressing Deputy Abdullah Aatham in the Amritsar Debate, the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) says:

'...This is the claim of the Holy Qur'an that it makes regarding its teaching and goes on to present its evidence as well. However, due to the time constraint right now, that will be stated in my written reply to his response. For now, it is requested to Deputy Abdullah Aatham Sahib that in line with the pre-arranged conditions about these matters that have already been put in writing, he presents a claim of the gospel

at par with this style and this glory, because all authors know ‘what star outshines the sun?’ in particular the Glorious God Who is Powerful and has authority over everything and has insurmountable and extensive knowledge! A book that we attribute to Him has got to be self-subsisting and self-sustaining because if it is dependent on outside support about its claim and proof of claim then that can never be the word of God. Let it be once again reminded that right now the only objective is that just as the Holy Qur’an has claimed its universality and its perfection, the portion of Gospel attributed to Jesus (on whom be peace) should make the same claim and should at the very least constitute Jesus (on whom be peace) declaring his teaching as final and not leaving it in expectation of another time.”

(Jang e Muqaddas)

Among the references of the New Testament presented by Deputy Abdullah Aatham in response to this question, there is no claim of the universality, perfection and matchlessness of the New Testament or its books but there is a claim of Jesus’ (on whom be peace) teaching being obligatory. Whereas the issue was whether any book of the New Testament, like the Holy Qur’an, asserts itself to be matchless, universal and perfect? These books contain no such claim.

Out of the references presented by Deputy Abdullah Aatham only one is from the four gospels. It is from John and reads:

‘Then Jesus cried aloud: “Whoever believes in me believes not in me but in Him who sent me. And whoever sees me, sees Him who sent me. I have come as light into the world, so that everyone who believes in me should not remain in the darkness. I do not judge anyone who hears my words and does not keep them, for I came not to judge the world, but to

save the world. The one who rejects me and does not receive my word has a judge; on the last day the word that I have spoken will serve as judge, for I have not spoken on my own, but the Father who sent me has Himself given me a commandment about what to say and what to speak. And I know that His commandment is eternal life. What I speak, therefore, I speak just as the Father has told me.’

(John 12:44-50)

The above text does not even hint at claiming that the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke or John were universal and perfect books. Neither were these books around when Jesus (on whom be peace) said these words, nor did Jesus (on whom be peace) have any knowledge of these books. Here Jesus (on whom be peace) is presenting his claim to be from God and of being worthy of obedience, with which we fully concur. Jesus (on whom be peace) was not God rather he was from God, that is, he was a prophet of God and those he addressed were obligated to obey him. This has nothing even remotely to do with the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke or John being universal.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Syed Mir Mahmood Ahmad Nasir is the Principal of Jamia Ahmadiyya, the Theosophic Seminary of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. The author is an unmatched scholar with an undefeatable appetite for detail. His scholarly commentaries on Ahadith, the traditions of the Holy Prophet(sa), have been greatly admired by all. The author also served as one of the pioneering missionary in the United Kingdom and later the United States of America for several years.

Coming soon from the same author, an analysis of Buddhism.

Treatment of Women by the West

A rejoinder to the continuing criticism of the treatment of Muslim Women – the true status of women in the West. A Commentary on some verses of the Holy Qur'an delivered by Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IV (rahma'ullah) on 26th January 1997 at the Fazal Mosque, London.

Translated from Urdu by Shermeen Butt

Men are guardians over women because Allah has made some of them excel over others, and because they (men) spend of their wealth. So virtuous women [are those who] are obedient, and guard the secrets [of their husbands] with Allah's protection. And [as for] those on whose part you fear disobedience, admonish them and leave them alone in their beds, and chastise them. Then if they obey you, seek not a way against them. Surely, Allah is High, Great.

(Surah Al Nisa. Verse 35)

Having recited the above verses of the Holy Qur'an and read its translation, Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IV^(ru) said:

I have previously covered most aspects of the verse that I have just recited. It has been the focus of the last three commentaries. I have commented on the issue raised by Rev. E. M. Wherry (a Western Orientalist) in that this particular verse plays a most significant role in distinguishing between Islamic and Christian societies and clarifies most vividly as to what the nature of any particular society is and the status it gives to women. Reluctantly, I responded to this giving just some examples of Christian society with reference to their faith. However as I was unable to complete my response due to time constraints, I now present the rest of the examples to you.

I have already cited examples of the treatment meted out to women from a religious point of view in accusation of lewdness. The only way for a woman so accused to free herself from the accusation was for her to be submitted to a horrifying procedure born of nascency. She was made to drink a filthy concoction and the dirt from around the church was crammed into her mouth, and if this did not result in her abdomen becoming distended then she was deemed innocent. If otherwise she was condemned to ignominy. There is no requirement what-so-ever for any man so accused to prove his innocence.

Islam is more equable in that both men and women have a right to imprecate against the offender, and if a woman denied a man's calumny under oath then she would certainly not be punished. In both instances four oaths are required and therefore the notion that there is disparity in the number of oaths taken is also wrong. Both men and women take the oath four times.

If both refute each other on oath, then their affair is entrusted to Allah. A more rational and equitable teaching cannot be envisaged, indeed has not been envisaged to this day.

Now I shall present before you their treatment towards women with reference to their teachings, which was prevalent in their culture from a very long time ago until the very recent past, and was exclusively influenced by Christine doctrine. My researches show that the central reference in the Bible regarding the accusation of sorcery and the dreadful cruelty perpetrated on women so accused is that of Exodus, 22:18, which says: 'Put to death any woman who practises magic'.

I am still looking for a definite reference as to how this custom was enforced in Christianity so strictly for there is no reference by Jesus (on whom be peace) stating how women accused of witchcraft should be dealt with. It is probable that Exodus is the only guide. How is it that Saint

Paul, having effectively abrogated the Old Testament, continued to proclaim that the teaching regarding the witch/sorceress continue to be followed, and why did the world later follow on, committing transgressions against Christianity, based on just this one reference? In fact it is the distorted outlook of the Church that is being made evident. This is the inevitable outcome whenever the 'caretakers' of a religion take control of the jurisprudence thereof. If they do not find an old reference to support their interpretation they categorically impose their own distorted, foul outlook on the masses. They associate such dreadful teaching to religion to protect their personal power and in order to maintain their repressive rule. The research to authenticate and determine the origin of this teaching in Christianity is ongoing for it is felt that some basis therefore must exist somewhere in the commentaries.

However, I wish to say that the real Christian faith is completely

free from blame in this matter. There is not a jot of censure on the Christianity that was revealed to Jesus (on whom be peace) and that he promulgated. So I urge you to harbour no ill feeling towards Christianity in your hearts as we go through the horrific incidences here related. This is not Christianity; this is the evil of the Church. It is thus in each religion and no religion is exempt from it. Whenever the clergy repressively gets the control of a religion it metes out a most brutal treatment to each human value until not one shred of humanity remains, much less any sign of Divine teachings. It is most probable that all reliance is put on this brief reference from Exodus. There are some other references, which are not directly about witches, however, the Bible gives examples of witches while cursing some towns. This gives credence to the idea that this belief was customary in Judaism from a religious standpoint. However there is no mention anywhere of cruelty to witches among the Jews whereas it is abundantly evident in

Christianity, and this, as I mentioned earlier, is the mystery that we are trying to solve.

Nahum 3:4 speaks of the city of Nineveh incurring the wrath of God and says that it was a consequence of the profusion of immorality by the beautiful depraved witch for 'she sells nations with her immorality and households with her sorcery.' In fact the city of Nineveh has been presented here as an immoral depraved woman and sorcery is mentioned by the by as a means of condemnation as the concrete reference pertaining to jurisprudence is that of Exodus 22:18, 'Put to death any woman who practises magic.'

This teaching had been strictly adhered to in Christianity and continued till the time of Rev. Wherry himself. This is the segment of which you should be aware.

A book entitled *Witches and Witchcraft* by Jeremy Kingston meticulously compiles incidences that took place in different

Christian countries like Britain, Germany etc. and which are supported by historical evidence as having actually occurred, rather than being based on heresy. Allah reward this author for he has exposed a most brutal fact in a most fair manner. He says:

'The devilishness of the torture was limited only by Scotland's primitive technology limiting the construction of mechanical devices. The devices they did possess however produced the necessary results. In Edinburgh Castle in 1594, Alison Balfour, an accused witch, was kept for forty-eight hours in the Caspee Clause, an iron device that crushed her arms. While undergoing this torture she was forced to watch her 81-year old husband being crushed under 700 pounds of iron bars! Her son's feet were crushed in the 'Spanish Boots' in which 57 blows reduced his boots to pulp. Her seven-year old daughter was tortured with the 'Pilly-winks', which is a thumb-

screw. Meanwhile in the stricken countryside outside the city 368 women in 22 villages were burnt as witches within six years. Two villages were left with only one female each in evidence a piece.’

The author has made some excuses for the torture being relatively limited due to the devices being crude. However, this relief was not due to the prevalent Christian beliefs but due to the backwardness of Scotland. Otherwise wherever the technology was advanced the torture meted out was most horrific. This brutality was going on in circa 1594 when Galileo had made his invention and the Renaissance period had started!

It is interesting to look into the reason why such tortures were concentrated in certain areas. The fact is that there was a most dreadful and Satanic unwritten pact between the Church and the aristocracy in those days and the Christian Church provided full patronage to the aristocracy of

that time, apart from when they dared to contend with the Church. Workers across the country, and particularly in Scotland, were not allowed to complain of being over-worked or oppressed or to demand their rights. Such demands merited, at the direction of the church, the most horrific punishments. The punishments were carried out on the pretext of alleged witchcraft. The methods to verify the allegation were innately horrific. Therefore, there was no means of escape. The cruelty that was carried out in Scotland was due to the aristocracy’s desire to have an iron-hold on the peasants. This level of servitude was the worst ever seen. Nowhere in the history of the world has there been such dreadful example of slavery as that which prevailed in Europe. Indeed, it was mostly the Scottish people, where the cruelty exceeded all bounds under the pretext of religious law, and the brutalities were fully supported by the Church, who became the penal settlers of, or migrated to, Australia.

One has to bear in mind that the Church, i.e. Catholicism had complete control over the Roman Empire and Christianity was meddled with by kings and aristocrats. It was the same situation in Spain, all would come to pass as a result of conspiracies. In the rare situation when a ruler would take on the Church, he would be dealt with severely. Jeremy Kingston (*ibid*) goes on to say:

‘The law of the Holy Roman Empire to which the German states belonged made the torture of those who were accused of witchcraft mandatory so an accusation of witchcraft always produced a confession and lead to the death usually by burning of the supposed witch.’

Once any woman had an allegation made against her she was presented in the court, and two types of procedure followed; one was torture, of which many examples are detailed in this book. Once she had been through the torture she was interrogated

so as to establish her guilt or innocence. The torture was so dreadful that it was not easily survived. It is therefore likely that at times women confessed beforehand out of sheer fright. Their fright stemmed from the fact that the punishment entailed being burnt alive. The method of this was to hang them on a gallows-like structure with fire burning underneath which slowly roasted them. Most of these women used to die during the torture and those who survived were most definitely burnt alive. However, there was another method which could not be survived at all and that exhibits their genius in establishing justice within Christianity.

A favourite method of determining innocence or guilt was to immerse the ‘witch’ in water with her hands and feet tied up and with a weight attached to her. Obviously if she is a witch she will not drown, and if she does not drown, burn her alive; however, if she drowns then the matter is with God, she gave her

life in innocence and was at least saved from the torment of fire. This was their own sense of justice, their idea of fairness in matters of testimony. Yet they carp about Islam!

One wonders about the fact that Rev. Wherry was aware of all this yet he attacked Islam most audaciously for not granting any status to women.

Anyone wishing to understand the status of women in Islam should come and observe our Christian homes and see what goes on therein. They would then find out as to how much love has a part to play in our affairs and to what extent Islam is devoid of love! This is the summary of the nonsense from him, to which I am now responding.

As far as rights are concerned, objection has been raised that in Islam it is permissible to strike a woman, even though this Islamic injunction comes with many provisos, in particular the stipulation of not leaving a mark. Besides, there is no illustration of

this type of chastisement from the life of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings be on him) and his Companion. The reality of the decreed chastisement in Islam is no more than an attribution put in place as common limits that must be exceeded in dealing with other human beings.

In England in 1915, a magistrate gave a legal ruling that a husband could strike his belligerent wife – this entails the proviso of *nashooz* (disobedience) in the said Qur’anic verse. They are compelled to apply the truth of the Qur’anic teachings on themselves but they do not do it with the honourable stipulations of the Holy Qur’an. Instead, they do it in a very crude manner, open to much abuse and exploitation, and take full advantage of legal loopholes. The above was a magisterial ruling which became the law. The ruling of the magistrate was that a husband could strike his belligerent wife, however, the stick with which he strikes should not be thicker than his

thumb. The specification within the law regarding the measurement of the thumb in relation to the stick is most peculiar indeed. It would have presented the ludicrous situation in that the stick would have to vary in its thickness being in proportion with the man's build and as a consequence the ensuing chastisement would have varied significantly in its severity due to the requisite ratio of the stick to the husband's physique.

These days it seems to be the in-thing in the West to be vociferous about child labour in the Third World, to declare it an oppression and to demand a boycott of all imports where child labour is involved. Such enthusiasm is, without exception, always generated by political disenchantment. They have always been fully aware of exactly what goes on in such places as Japan and other countries, even in England. Yet, they turn a blind eye there.

It was not so long ago that women and children were

horribly oppressed in factories and sweatshops here in England. Charles Dickens has mentioned it elaborately in his books and has depicted some horrific illustrations of the oppression of women and children. Women were made to work for up to 18 hours shifts in factories for a pittance in wages.

All these references have been taken from a book entitled *Women in Europe since 1790* by Patricia Francis, therefore, all these instances are from after 1750 up to the beginning of 1900's. Men were allowed to extract as much work from women as they wished and put as much burden on them as they desired. If this weighed the women down and resulted in their physical collapse in that they could not carry on performing tasks, then men were allowed to divorce them. In this instance Christianity, where divorce is not allowed, permits men to use women to the point of their physical collapse, and then goes on to allow them to divorce and remarry.

Up till 1890 the situation in Germany was so grim and the oppression meted out to women and children was so severe that women would pray for their children's death.

In her book *Violence Against Women Crisis in the Eighties*, published in 1983 by Penguin, Elizabeth Wilson analyses the contemporary period from 1973 to 1983. On page 59, she mentions the modern day phenomenon whereby men recount tales of wife beating in jest and as hilarity when out at revelries and the fact that they sit in pubs and boast about using their women in the profession of prostitution. Would this be the respect and honour of the woman that Rev. Wherry has been so strident about? I wish to draw your attention to the fact that these instances are of much later date than his death.

The comments on the back cover of the book by Elizabeth Wilson denotes that violence against women is not just due to the crookedness of the society, rather

the cruelty of wife beating and prostitution that is so apparent, is borne out of complicity between politics and the society, that is to say politics is equally responsible for this. Just as Christianity had colluded with politics in the past so the complicity carries on today.

Then there is the recurrent criticism that Islam has not given woman any rights, that she can only inherit half as much as a male! Let us view their own teaching, up till the late 1600's a woman was considered man's property in Europe. The customs of the ignorant pre-Islamic Arabs prevailed here until the late 1600's. Woman was treated as cattle and was just a machine to create children. The above references are from *Harem from History*, a book by Sheila Robotham that covers 300 years of women's oppression and the fight against it.

Up till 1891, women had no right to own any kind of property in Germany, Scandinavia and America, rather she was the

property of her husband. The law simply did not permit it. In England, prior to 1890 widows had no right of inheritance to the property of their husbands and until 1882 a woman could not own any property in her name. Whatever she earned would be in the name of her husband. As recently as 1966, a woman had no legal right of stay in her husband's house and a husband could throw her out at any time, as she did not have the protection of the law.

In the 19th century England and France, women could not seek divorce from their husbands, whereas men could divorce their wives at any time. Although Christianity does not allow divorce, a woman could be abandoned, as in the instance cited here before, after enduring extreme physical hardship and being rendered 'useless'. In the 19th century England and France, women guilty of lewdness were imprisoned for two years. This was a climb down from the earlier punishments of being

burnt alive etc. and illustrates the grip the society had on Christianity in that religious rules, and Laws were altered at whim and fancy.

As regards their criticism about the existence of 'Harem' in Islam, it was during the 19th century that their men had the right to keep concubines along with their wives. In any case, the right to keep a harem was regardless of a man's marital status and a great number of wealthy people used to keep harems. This rule is followed to this day here in England.

I say this in light of the experience I have had when dealing with divorce issues. The subject of the conjugal status of the man can arise while his divorce case is being processed through the legal system of the country and has not yet been completed. In one such instance I suggested that the Legal Board of the country should be consulted. The response from the Board to the query was that there was absolutely no problem, in even

keeping a 100 mistresses in a harem, as the law was only against having two wives!

There is indeed no law against immorality; rather the law is against those relationships not considered permissible by the law of the land. The concept within the West is that one may keep as many spouses as one likes, within the validity of one's religious beliefs. The law of the land would be completely indifferent to that and would not intervene, in that the situation would be in accordance to one's personal beliefs.

In view of this one wonders why should one bother with the references of the past? Here, in the present day, exactly that is what is taking places. Immorality is not a sin, however, trying to do things with piety is an offence. If one takes responsibility for the welfare of a woman and commits oneself to her, then the law will encroach upon you. However, if you go ahead without any sense of commitment and in a brazen way then all is well.

In the West the mother used to have no right over the children after divorce. On the other hand, the Holy Qur'an has established a most excellent settlement. Although the father has been given the right for the first nine years of the child's life, however, these are limited to him paying the maintenance; the children are to live with their mother. After nine years, the law queries the children as to whether they wish to continue to live with the mother or not. The children belong to the father in that he has all the financial obligations, but it is the right of the mother to keep young children with her. This has been established with great emphasis and all schools of Islamic jurisprudence concur on this, only varying in the age limit; some suggest the age limit of seven years, some nine and some go up to twelve years.

It is highly unlikely that children being brought up by a loving mother would prefer to live with their father. In the situation that they do decide to go with the father, they would have a valid

WOMEN WERE ALLOWED TO SIT FOR CAMBRIDGE EXAMINATIONS FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 1886, BUT IT WAS NOT UNTIL 1948 THAT WOMEN COULD GRADUATE WITH A DEGREE THERE. UP TILL 1920, WOMEN COULD NOT GAIN A PLACE AT THE OXFORD UNIVERSITY. UP TO 1944, A WOMAN USED TO BE DISMISSED FROM THE TEACHING PROFESSION AFTER HER MARRIAGE.

and firm reason to do so, for example the morality of the mother etc.

A majority of the children in our *Qadha* (Islamic court) cases opt to regularly meet the father but prefer to live with the mother, except of course in exceptional circumstances, as where the mother remarries and ensuing problems etc. arise. In such instances a mutually acceptable solution is found through communication and discussion.

Objection is also raised about the Islamic injunction of the testimony of two women as opposed to the testimony of one man. I have explained this matter before, that there is much misun-

derstanding regarding it. The Holy Qur'an has not differentiated in the testimonies. However, certain ways and means have been adopted in order to dissuade and discourage women from the encumbrance of appearing in legal courts.

In fact, I consider there to be no real difference in the testimonies, and whatever disparity that there is and that I have just mentioned is applicable only in matters pertaining to finance, and is adhered to in a controlled manner. I shall not go into the details of this argument here and shall only say that according to the 19th century English law, a married woman did not have the right to give a testimony and

could not say anything against her husband. So a married woman's testimony against her husband was deemed illegal and worthless. When women campaigned to gain the right to vote they were severely punished and attempts were made to crush their campaign.

It was considered a disgrace for women to do scholarly work. Women were allowed to sit for Cambridge examinations for the first time in 1886, but it was not until 1948 that women could graduate with a degree there. Up till 1920, women could not gain a place at the Oxford University. Up to 1944, a woman used to be dismissed from the teaching profession after her marriage. There was a marked difference between the pay scales of men and women despite doing the same job. This continues to be so in certain fields, for example in health.

As a consequence of their customs and mores, crime is widespread. Well-endorsed books present a bleak picture of the state

of affairs in Europe. In 1973, there were 32,261 divorces as a result of one spouse being unfaithful and by 1983, this number had risen to 47,127. As far as total number of divorces in a year are concerned, in 1973 divorces in excess of 106,000 were recorded whereas in 1983 the number was recorded to have reached 147,489. There are clear indications that this growing trend of divorce is largely due to infidelity. Although immorality in itself is not looked down upon, it is considered to be legally sufficient to dissolve a marriage.

In 1970, women began endeavours against the issue of domestic violence and by 1976 it was recognised that violence within the home was a criminal offence and was thus deemed a legal 'violent act'. Prior to this domestic violence against women was not illegal. A report by the research team of WAFE produced in 1981 indicates that little effect was in evidence of this legal recognition. Unless a judge is completely convinced that the violence is intense, he

cannot order a man to leave the marital home. In ordering him to leave home the judge runs the risk of ‘burdening’ the local council with homeless men. So judges usually discourage this. However, the statute is in place. In a research report published in 1981, 656 women were interviewed. They were asked as to how they were treated at home. It is worth mentioning that these were women who lived in the backdrop of the developed, civilised Western world. 64% reported that their husbands were violent with them and that the police offered no help, maintaining that they had no right to interfere in domestic issues. That is to say that 64% of women are being subjected to physical violence in their marital homes. Yet they raise objections against the Islamic injunction of chastisement. It seems they have objection wherever human rights are being maintained, wherever justice is being maintained, but in contrary circumstance they do not seem to be bothered at all. This is the freedom of conscience!

The Tyneside social services have published a report, which, points out that in the Northeast of England wife beating often results as a consequence of drunkenness and that it is a regular rather than an exceptional occurrence. The terrible fact is that this matter still has a macho image there.

You will recall the reference of the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) that I gave earlier where he had said that he could not even imagine the cowardice and shamelessness of a man daring to hit a woman. This is the actuality of the teaching of Islam as opposed to the potted conclusion of the West’s civilised teaching, in which, they have violated Christianity as well as humanity.

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This feature length article is the address read at the opening of the first mosque in London, and first published in *The Review of Religions*. It provides an excellent introduction to the true message of Islam.

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July 2003

Martyrs of Afghanistan

Our lead article is an account of the life and times of Sahibzada Abdul Latif, his martyrdom a hundred years ago, and the prophecy made by the Promised Messiah^(as): 'the land of Afghanistan will see what consequences the shedding of his blood will entail.

Muhammad Zafrulla Khan – UK

100 Years of Divine Retribution

The unfortunate land of Afghanistan continues to pay a heavy price for the innocent lives lost there. From the plague in Kabul, to coups, the /talibans and its 'carpet bombing'.

Latif Ahmad Qureshi – UK

Efficacy of Repentance – Part I

When people forget God, God Almighty also becomes indifferent towards such people.

Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as)

Q&A: Belief and Guidance

Is there room for a theocratic state; have more people been killed by religion?; why do we need prophets?

Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad^(ru)

Persecution of the Ahmadiyya Community in Pakistan: An Analysis Under International Law and International Relations:

Continuing a detailed review of the background to the persecution of Ahmadis.

Amjad Mahmood Khan – USA

COMMENT: Resilience of Children

August 2003

History of Islam

A brief history of Islam from the Caliphates, through the medieval era, the Mongols and Ottoman Empires to today (well, 1947), including a background to the political history of some Muslim countries.

Late Professor Abdus Salam – UK

Efficacy of Repentance – Part II

God is now quickening the earth after its spiritual death; the time is ripe for the arrival of the Messiah; God's promise would be fulfilled.

Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as)

Q&A: Response to Questions

Spiritualism in a material world; life after death; is animal slaughter cruel; and idealising pop-stars.

Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad^(ru)

Euphesus – Turning Points for Christianity

Paul and John visited this town in Turkey, with its caves where Christians fled persecution and where a council changed Mary's status.

Fazal Ahmad – UK

Future of Revelation – Part II

The rationale for the concept of the finality of Prophethood.

Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad^(ru)

Persecution of the Ahmadiyya Community in Pakistan: An Analysis Under International Law and International Relations.

Final part of a detailed review of the background to the persecution of Ahmadis.

Amjad Mahmood Khan – USA

COMMENT: Who Switched off the Lights

September 2003

Islam and Peace

A look at how Islam promotes the establishment of peace at all levels.

Rafiq Ahmed Hayat – UK

Spiritual Progress

Spiritual progress is not just about the rejection of bad deeds but the doing of good acts and sincerity of one's love of God:

Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as)

Q&A: Faith and Belief

The belief in religion through firm conviction in faith rather than scientific reasoning is discussed as well as how experiences concerning God and faith can be explained and understood.

Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad^(ru)

Islam and the Creation of Peace Loving Men and Women

The Islamic concept of peace extends to avoiding wars, readily making peace, justice and respect for the feeling of others.

Ataul Mujeeb Rashed – Imam of the London Mosque

Revelation, Rationality, Knowledge and Truth

Continuing the serialisation of the book looking this month at attempts to philosophically justify the finality of non-law bearing prophethood: .

Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad^(ru)

COMMENT: Headscarves – Oppression or Freedom of Choice?

October 2003

Jesus^(as) Versus Finality

A rational analysis of the contradictory belief in the physical re-advent of Jesus^(as), Son of Mary, after the presupposed last prophet, the Holy Prophet of Islam^(sa).

Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad^(ru)

Friends of Allah

The righteous pass through much travail and trials but they find God in this very life.

Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as)

Muslim Beliefs in Jesus Christ^(as)

A review of the various Islamic schools of thought surrounding the life and mission of Jesus^(as).

Dr Kalim Malik – USA

Q&A – Belief and Guidance

If the Imam Mahdi has come, why is Islam not the strongest religion in the world? How did the idea of Jesus^(as) physical ascent enter Muslim ideology?

Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad^(ru)

The Purpose of Religion and Prophets

A brief look at what religion requires of us and the purpose prophets serve.

Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad

COMMENT: Professional Fasting – Why the stunt of the American illusionist falls far short of a great Islamic institution.

November 2003

Special Feature:

An historical address made by the head of the worldwide Ahmadiyya Community, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad – Khalifatul Masih V, to distinguished guests, VIP's and members of the Community at the inauguration of one of Europe's largest mosques

The Path to Righteousness

Acts of goodness carried out with sincerity and true obedience to God purifies the soul and protects one from not only the afterlife but enables one to enjoy the spiritual paradise in this world.

Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as).

Ramadan and the Essence of its Blessings

The holiest of all the months in the year is reviewed with a simple guide to rules of fasting and the spiritual benefits that can be

achieved.

Late Sheikh Mubarak Ahmad – ex-Missionary in-Charge, UK

The I'tikaf Experience

One person's account of his deep spiritual encounter and experiences during the last ten days of the fasting month.

Bockarie Tommy Kallon – UK

Epilogue

The concluding chapter of the highly acclaimed book, *Revelation, Rationality, Knowledge and Truth* which has been serialised regularly in this publication

Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad^(ru)

Women in the Holy Qur'an

A clear and concise look at Islamic issues considered by many as oppressive but which in fact provide women with much rights and status than any modern day legislation.

Tahmeena Luqman – Oregon, USA

STRESS: A Spiritual Perspective and its Management:

How a firm conviction in one's faith, spiritual belief and trust in God is an important factor in controlling stress.

Dr. Ihsan-UK-Hague, MB FRCP, Consultant Physician – Pakistan

December 2003

Sin Defined:

By Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as)

Analysis of the Divinely Revealed Status of the New Testament:

By Syed Mir Mahmood Ahmad Nasir – Principal Jam'ia Ahmadiyya, Rabwah, Pakistan.

Treatment of Women by the West

By Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad^(ru)

A rejoinder to Orientalists' criticisms on the treatment of women in Islam

COMMENT: Religious Tolerance

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